

Interest Statement concerning Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Corridor Implementation

Approved: July 26, 2010

The City of Bellevue supports regional efforts to purchase and develop East King County's BNSF Corridor for future public use and benefit. The City continues to support preserving this important public right-of-way for multiple public uses: for a regional trail system and passenger commuter rail purposes. This approach is consistent with regional policy as adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council and King County. The Bellevue Council supports the following principles for future corridor design and implementation processes within the King County segment of the corridor:¹

1. **Develop a Corridor Vision & Effective Governance Structure.** There must be a designated regional lead to advance planning work along this important Eastside corridor. The lead planning organization should work with regional stakeholders to develop a long-term vision and detailed work plan for the development of the BNSF corridor to guide near and long term use decisions and identify supporting actions including additional financial resources. BNSF partnership representatives should define clear roles and responsibilities for the management and operation of the corridor and ensure all efforts going forward are marked by a timely process with meaningful engagement for cities along the corridor, comprehensive public outreach and transparent decision-making.
2. **Implement Multiple Uses.** The region should advance a planning process that includes a regional trail and compatible planning effort for passenger commuter rail along on this valuable public right-of-way. Bellevue does not support a single trail use only: this corridor is a necessary component for the Eastside's increasingly multimodal transportation network essential to support Eastside and Bellevue growth. Moreover, the BNSF partnership should recognize that in addition to implementation of a trail and passenger rail uses, there may be opportunities to achieve multiple policy objectives and efficiencies given the proximity of public utility uses within, under and adjacent to the corridor. As multiple uses are planned, there should be serious consideration of the potential impacts to residents and businesses along the corridor.
3. **Advance Design and Phasing Plan in Timely Fashion.** All affected intersections and interchanges along the corridor within affected cities should be carefully analyzed, planned and phased, especially where there are competing interests for highly constrained right-of-way. Bellevue has a number of key interchanges that intersect with the BNSF right-of-way where improvements are being considered for future city roadway capacity and land use development. In particular, grade separation for future uses at NE 4th, NE 6th and especially NE 8th within the Bellevue area will require careful planning and design. Sound Transit's East Link project and WSDOT future highway expansion also overlaps with the BNSF corridor within downtown Bellevue. The BNSF design process must be fully integrated with city, state and regional projects. Integrated planning efforts should ensure adequate public access points along the corridor.
4. **Ensure Planning Consistency & Innovation.** Relevant regional and local transportation plans, including those developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040), Sound Transit (ST2 and Long Range Plan) and city Comprehensive Plans should be updated to reflect new BNSF analysis. Implementation plans should be highly creative and utilize value engineering, opportunities for joint uses adjacent or near the corridor and planning activities that would be most likely to lead to synergistic opportunities.
5. **Develop a Complementary Financial Plan.** BNSF partners should seek additional funding from a range of funding opportunities including state, federal and private organizations for both capital and operating needs. Innovative finance methods should rely on national best practices and cost effectiveness.

¹ There are currently six partners working within the King County segment of the corridor to develop a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding for the purchase agreement of the BNSF Corridor: Port of Seattle, King County, Cascade Water Alliance, Sound Transit, City of Redmond and Puget Sound Energy (PSE).